

FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

**SENATE BILLS NOS. 551, 410,  
539, 528 & 296**  
91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Reported from the Committee on Aging, Families and Mental Health, March 15, 2001, with recommendation that the Senate Committee Substitute do pass.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

2094S.03C

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**AN ACT**

To repeal sections 208.029, 210.536, 211.183, 452.377, 452.402 and 453.073, RSMo 2000, relating to children and families, and to enact in lieu thereof six new sections relating to the same subject.

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*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Sections 208.029, 210.536, 211.183, 452.377, 452.402 and 453.073, RSMo 2000, are repealed and six new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 208.029, 210.536, 211.183, 452.377, 452.402 and 453.073, to read as follows:

208.029. 1. **Subject to appropriations**, the division of family services in the department of social services shall establish the "Grandparents as Foster Parents Program". The grandparents as foster parents program recognizes that:

- (1) Raising a grandchild differs from when the grandparents raised their own children;
- (2) Caring for a grandchild often places additional financial, social and psychological strain on grandparents with fixed incomes;
- (3) Different parenting skills are necessary when raising a grandchild and many grandparents do not possess such skills, are not aware of how to obtain such skills and cannot afford access to the services necessary to obtain such skills;
- (4) Grandparents, like nonrelative foster parents, need a support structure, including counseling for the grandchild and caretaker, respite care and transportation assistance and child

**EXPLANATION--Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

care;

(5) The level of care provided by grandparents does not differ from nonrelative foster care, but reimbursement for such care is substantially less for grandparents; and

(6) Grandparents are often unaware of the cash assistance alternatives to the federal TANF block grant funds which are available to support the grandchildren placed in their care.

2. A grandparent shall be eligible to participate in the grandparents as foster parents program if such grandparent:

(1) Is fifty years of age or older;

(2) Is the legal guardian of a grandchild placed in such grandparent's custody; [and]

**(3) Has an income at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level;**

**and**

**[ (3) ] (4)** Participates in the training available through the division pursuant to subsection 4 of this section.

3. If there are no grandparents of a child who are willing to participate in the grandparents as foster parents program, the division may include in the program any other close relative who becomes the legal guardian of the child or obtains legal custody of the child, as granted by a court of competent jurisdiction if such relative also meets the requirements of subdivisions (1) **[and], (3) and (4)** of subsection 2 of this section.

4. The grandparents as foster parents program **[shall] may**:

(1) Provide reimbursement based on the current foster care payment schedule to eligible grandparents, as defined in subsection 2 of this section, for the care of a grandchild;

(2) Establish program requirements, including, but not limited to, participation in foster parent training, parenting skills training, childhood immunizations and other similar health screens;

(3) Provide continuing counseling for the child and grandparent;

(4) Provide support services, including, but not limited to, respite care, child care and transportation assistance;

(5) Provide Medicaid services to such child; and

(6) Provide ancillary services, such as child care, respite, transportation assistance and clothing allowances, but not direct financial payments to the participants in the program after such participants complete the training required in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

5. Funding for cash benefits and other assistance provided to eligible grandparents shall be made from the state maintenance of effort funds.

6. Grandparents who are either under fifty years of age, or are fifty years of age or older and refuse to participate in the training pursuant to subsection 2 of this section, may apply to the division for foster care reimbursement and assistance. Such cash and noncash assistance shall be funded through the TANF funds. Any work participation and time limit requirements pursuant

to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended, shall apply to all such persons.

210.536. 1. The cost of foster care shall be paid by the division of family services pursuant to chapter 207, RSMo, except that the court shall evaluate the ability of parents to pay part or all of the cost for such care, and shall order such payment to the department of social services. **Beginning in the 2003 fiscal year, the reimbursement rate for the cost of foster care shall be incrementally increased over a four-year period until the reimbursement rate maintained by the division meets or exceeds the foster care rates established by the United States Department of Agriculture.**

2. The court may effectuate such order against any asset of the parent for failure to provide part or all of the cost of foster care according to the court order; provided further, that any assignment, attachment, garnishment, or lien against such assets shall be served upon the person in possession of the assets or shall be recorded in the office of the recorder of deeds in the county in which the parent resides or in which the asset is located. The department of social services may contract on a contingency fee basis with private attorneys for the collection and enforcement of orders against such assets. Any such third party payment shall be paid directly to the department of social services.

211.183. 1. In juvenile court proceedings regarding the removal of a child from his or her home, the court's order shall include a determination of whether the division of family services has made reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child and, after removal, to make it possible for the child to return home. If the first contact with the family occurred during an emergency in which the child could not safely remain at home even with reasonable in-home services, the division shall be deemed to have made reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal.

2. "Reasonable efforts" means the exercise of reasonable diligence and care by the division to utilize all available services related to meeting the needs of the juvenile and the family. In determining reasonable efforts to be made and in making such reasonable efforts, the child's present and ongoing health and safety shall be the paramount consideration.

3. In support of its determination of whether reasonable efforts have been made, the court shall enter findings, including a brief description of what preventive or reunification efforts were made and why further efforts could or could not have prevented or shortened the separation of the family. The division shall have the burden of demonstrating reasonable efforts.

4. The juvenile court may authorize the removal of the child even if the preventive and reunification efforts of the division have not been reasonable, but further efforts could not permit the child to remain at home.

5. Before a child may be removed from the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child by order of a juvenile court, excluding commitments to the division of youth services, the court shall

in its orders:

(1) State whether removal of the child is necessary to protect the child and the reasons therefor;

(2) Describe the services available to the family before removal of the child, including in-home services;

(3) Describe the efforts made to provide those services relevant to the needs of the family before the removal of the child;

(4) State why efforts made to provide family services described did not prevent removal of the child; and

(5) State whether efforts made to prevent removal of the child were reasonable, based upon the needs of the family and child.

6. If continuation of reasonable efforts, as described in this section, is determined by the division to be inconsistent with establishing a permanent placement for the child, the division shall take such steps as are deemed necessary by the division, including seeking modification of any court order to modify the permanency plan for the child.

7. The division shall not be required to make reasonable efforts, as defined in this section, but has the discretion to make reasonable efforts if a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that:

(1) The parent has subjected the child **or any child of the parent** to a severe act or recurrent acts of physical, emotional or sexual abuse toward the child, including an act of incest, **or the acts were committed by another person under circumstances that indicate that the parent knew or should have known that such acts were being committed toward the child or any child of the parent**; or

(2) The parent has:

(a) Committed murder of another child of the parent;

(b) Committed voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent;

(c) Aided or abetted, attempted, conspired or solicited to commit such a murder or voluntary manslaughter; or

(d) Committed a felony assault that resulted in serious bodily injury to the child or to another child of the parent; or

(3) The parent's parental rights to a sibling have been involuntarily terminated.

8. If the court determines that reasonable efforts, as described in this section, are not required to be made by the division, the court shall hold a permanency hearing within thirty days after the court has made such determination. The division shall complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child.

9. The division may concurrently engage in reasonable efforts, as described in this section, while engaging in such other measures as are deemed appropriate by the division to establish a

permanent placement for the child.

452.377. 1. For purposes of this section and section 452.375, "relocate" or "relocation" means a change in the principal residence of a child **thirty miles or greater from the child's current principal residence or out of this state** for a period of ninety days or more, but does not include a temporary absence from the principal residence.

2. Notice of a proposed relocation of the residence of the child **thirty miles or greater from the child's current principal residence or out of this state**, or any party entitled to custody or visitation of the child, shall be given in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, to any party with custody or visitation rights. Absent exigent circumstances as determined by a court with jurisdiction, written notice shall be provided at least sixty days in advance of the proposed relocation. The notice of the proposed relocation shall include the following information:

(1) The intended new residence, including the specific address and mailing address, if known, and if not known, the city;

(2) The home telephone number of the new residence, if known;

(3) The date of the intended move or proposed relocation;

(4) A brief statement of the specific reasons for the proposed relocation of a child, if applicable; and

(5) A proposal for a revised schedule of custody or visitation with the child, if applicable.

3. A party required to give notice of a proposed relocation pursuant to subsection 2 of this section has a continuing duty to provide a change in or addition to the information required by this section as soon as such information becomes known.

4. In exceptional circumstances, **including cases with credible evidence of domestic violence**, where the court makes a finding that the health or safety of any adult or child would be unreasonably placed at risk by the disclosure of the required identifying information concerning a proposed relocation of the child, the court may order that:

(1) The specific residence address and telephone number of the child, parent or person, and other identifying information shall not be disclosed in the pleadings, notice, other documents filed in the proceeding or the final order except for an in camera disclosure;

(2) The notice requirements provided by this section shall be waived to the extent necessary to protect the health or safety of a child or any adult; or

(3) Any other remedial action the court considers necessary to facilitate the legitimate needs of the parties and the best interest of the child.

5. The court shall consider a failure to provide **any** notice of a proposed relocation of a child as:

(1) A factor in determining whether custody and visitation should be modified;

(2) A basis for ordering the return of the child if the relocation occurs without notice; and

(3) Sufficient cause to order the party seeking to relocate the child to pay reasonable expenses and attorneys fees incurred by the party objecting to the relocation.

6. If the parties agree to a revised schedule of custody and visitation for the child, which includes a parenting plan, they may submit the terms of such agreement to the court with a written affidavit signed by all parties with custody or visitation assenting to the terms of the agreement, and the court may order the revised parenting plan and applicable visitation schedule without a hearing.

7. The residence of the child may be relocated sixty days after providing notice, as required by this section, unless a parent files a motion seeking an order to prevent the relocation within thirty days after receipt of such notice. Such motion shall be accompanied by an affidavit setting forth the specific factual basis supporting a prohibition of the relocation. **Thirty days after filing such motion, the party opposing relocation shall request a hearing on such motion. Failure to do so shall result in a waiver of the objection to relocation.** The person seeking relocation shall file a response to the motion within fourteen days, unless extended by the court for good cause, and include a counter-affidavit setting forth the facts in support of the relocation as well as a proposed revised parenting plan for the child.

8. If relocation of the child is proposed, a third party entitled by court order to legal custody of or visitation with a child and who is not a parent may file a cause of action to obtain a revised schedule of legal custody or visitation, but shall not prevent a relocation.

9. [The party seeking to relocate shall have the burden of proving that the proposed relocation is made in good faith and is in the best interest of the child.] **In ruling on the opposing party's motion, the court shall employ the following four factors to determine whether the relocation serves the best interests of the child:**

**(1) Whether the prospective advantages of the relocation will improve the general quality of life for the relocating parent and child;**

**(2) The integrity of the relocating parent's motives in relocating;**

**(3) The integrity of the opposing party's motives for opposing the relocation and the extent to which it is intended to secure a financial advantage with respect to continuing child support; and**

**(4) The realistic opportunity for visitation which can provide an adequate basis for preserving and fostering the opposing party's relationship with the child if the relocation is permitted.**

10. If relocation is permitted:

(1) The court shall order contact with the nonrelocating party including [custody or] visitation and telephone access sufficient to assure that the child has frequent, continuing and meaningful contact with the nonrelocating party unless the child's best interest warrants otherwise; and

(2) The court shall specify how the transportation costs will be allocated between the parties and adjust the child support, as appropriate, considering the costs of transportation.

11. After August 28, [1998] **2000**, every court order establishing or modifying custody or visitation shall include the following language: "Absent exigent circumstances as determined by a court with jurisdiction, you, as a party to this action, are ordered to notify, in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, and at least sixty days prior to the proposed relocation, each party to this action of [any] a proposed relocation [of] **greater than thirty miles from** the principal residence of the child **or out of this state**, including the following information:

(1) The intended new residence, including the specific address and mailing address, if known, and if not known, the city;

(2) The home telephone number of the new residence, if known;

(3) The date of the intended move or proposed relocation;

(4) A brief statement of the specific reasons for the proposed relocation of the child; and

(5) A proposal for a revised schedule of custody or visitation with the child.

Your obligation to provide this information to each party continues as long as you or any other party by virtue of this order is entitled to custody of a child covered by this order. Your failure to obey the order of this court regarding the proposed relocation may result in further litigation to enforce such order, including contempt of court. In addition, your failure to notify a party of a relocation of the child may be considered in a proceeding to modify custody or visitation with the child. Reasonable costs and attorney fees may be assessed against you if you fail to give the required notice."

12. Violation of the provisions of this section or a court order under this section may be deemed a change of circumstance under section 452.410, allowing the court to modify the prior custody decree. In addition, the court may utilize any and all powers relating to contempt conferred on it by law or rule of the Missouri supreme court.

13. Any party who objects in good faith to the relocation of a child's principal residence shall not be ordered to pay the costs and attorney's fees of the party seeking to relocate.

**14. Notwithstanding subsection 12 of this section, this section shall not be construed to eliminate the requirement that a motion to modify be filed and heard for purposes of modifying the custody provisions of a prior court order pursuant to section 452.410.**

452.402. 1. The court may grant reasonable visitation rights to the grandparents of the child and issue any necessary orders to enforce the decree. The court may grant grandparent visitation when:

(1) The parents of the child have filed for a dissolution of their marriage. A grandparent shall have the right to intervene in any dissolution action solely on the issue of visitation rights. Grandparents shall also have the right to file a motion to modify the original decree of

dissolution to seek visitation rights when such rights have been denied to them;

(2) One parent of the child is deceased and the surviving parent denies reasonable visitation rights **to a parent of the deceased parent of the child;**

(3) **The child has resided in the grandparent's home for at least six months within the twenty-four month period immediately preceding the filing of the petition;**

(4) A grandparent is unreasonably denied visitation with the child for a period exceeding ninety days. **However, if the natural parents are legally married to each other and are living together with the child, a grandparent may not file for unsupervised visitation pursuant to this subdivision;** or

[(4)] (5) The child is adopted by a stepparent, another grandparent or other blood relative.

2. The court shall determine if the visitation by the grandparent would be in the child's best interest or if it would endanger the child's physical health or impair the child's emotional development. Visitation may only be ordered when the court finds such visitation to be in the best interests of the child. **However, when the parents of the child are legally married to each other and are living together with the child, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that such parents know what is in the best interest of the child.** The court may order reasonable conditions or restrictions on grandparent visitation.

3. If the court finds it to be in the best interests of the child, the court may appoint a guardian ad litem for the child. The guardian ad litem shall be an attorney licensed to practice law in Missouri. The guardian ad litem may, for the purpose of determining the question of grandparent visitation rights, participate in the proceedings as if such guardian ad litem were a party. The court shall enter judgment allowing a reasonable fee to the guardian ad litem.

4. A home study, as described by section 452.390, may be ordered by the court to assist in determining the best interests of the child.

5. The court may, in its discretion, consult with the child regarding the child's wishes in determining the best interest of the child.

6. The right of a grandparent to seek or maintain visitation rights pursuant to this section may terminate upon the adoption of the child.

7. The court may award reasonable attorneys fees and expenses to the prevailing party.

453.073. 1. The division of family services is authorized to grant a subsidy to a child in one of the forms of allotment defined in section 453.065. **Beginning in the 2003 fiscal year, the subsidy rate for all allotments other than the diminishing allotment shall be incrementally increased over a four-year period until the subsidy rate maintained by the division meets or exceeds the adoption rates established by the United States Department of Agriculture.** Determination of the amount of monetary need is to be made by the division at the time of placement, if practicable, and in reference to the needs of the child, including consideration of the physical and mental condition, age and racial and ethnic background



of the child in each case; provided, however, that the subsidy amount shall not exceed the expenses of foster care and medical care for foster children paid under the homeless, dependent and neglected foster care program.

2. The subsidy shall be paid for children who have been in the care and custody of the division of family services under the homeless, dependent and neglected foster care program. In the case of a child who has been in the care and custody of a private child-caring or child-placing agency or in the care and custody of the division of youth services or the department of mental health, a subsidy shall be available from the division of family services subsidy program in the same manner and under the same circumstances and conditions as provided for a child who has been in the care and custody of the division of family services.

3. Within thirty days after the authorization for the grant of a subsidy by the division of family services, a written agreement shall be entered into by the division and the parents. The agreement shall set forth the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The type of allotment;
- (2) The amount of assistance payments;
- (3) The services to be provided;
- (4) The time period for which the subsidy is granted, if that period is reasonably ascertainable;
- (5) The obligation of the parents to inform the division when they are no longer providing support to the child or when events affect the subsidy eligibility of the child;
- (6) The eligibility of the child for Medicaid.

4. In the case that the subsidized family moves from the state of Missouri, the granted subsidy shall remain in force as stipulated in the allotment agreement, as long as the adopting family follows the established requirements and, provided further, that a subsidized family which has moved its residence from the state of Missouri shall, as a condition for the continuance of the granted subsidy, submit to the division of family services by the thirtieth day of June of each year, on a form to be provided by such division, a statement of the amounts paid for expenses for the care and maintenance of the adopted child in the preceding year. If the subsidized family fails to submit such form by the thirtieth day of June of any year, payments **[under] pursuant to** the provisions of sections 453.065 to 453.074 to a family which has moved its residence from the state of Missouri shall cease.